

So I look forward to the possibility of working with any colleague on protecting the sacred right to vote in this country.

I will have further comments on this legislation today.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 261, Christine P. O'Hearn, of New Jersey, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Jersey.

Charles E. Schumer, Brian Schatz, Benjamin L. Cardin, Robert Menendez, Tammy Duckworth, Christopher A. Coons, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Jacky Rosen, Patrick J. Leahy, Mazie Hirono, Margaret Wood Hassan, Jack Reed, Sheldon Whitehouse, Tammy Baldwin, Richard J. Durbin, Chris Van Hollen, Tina Smith, Ben Ray Lujan.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Christine P. O'Hearn, of New Jersey, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Jersey, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

(Mr. LUJÁN assumed the Chair.)

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS), and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 53, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 415 Ex.]

YEAS—53

Baldwin	Heinrich	Peters
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Reed
Blumenthal	Hirono	Rosen
Booker	Kaine	Sanders
Brown	Kelly	Schatz
Cantwell	King	Schumer
Cardin	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Carper	Leahy	Sinema
Casey	Lujan	Smith
Collins	Manchin	Stabenow
Coons	Markey	Tester
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murkowski	Warnock
Feinstein	Murphy	Warren
Gillibrand	Murray	Whitehouse
Graham	Ossoff	Wyden
Hassan	Padilla	

NAYS—44

Barrasso	Cotton	Hagerty
Blackburn	Cramer	Hawley
Boozman	Crapo	Hoeven
Braun	Cruz	Hyde-Smith
Burr	Daines	Inhofe
Capito	Ernst	Johnson
Cassidy	Fischer	Kennedy
Cornyn	Grassley	Lankford

Lee	Risch	Sullivan
Lummis	Romney	Thune
Marshall	Rubio	Toomey
McConnell	Sasse	Tuberville
Moran	Scott (FL)	Wicker
Paul	Scott (SC)	Young
Portman	Shelby	

NOT VOTING—3

Blunt	Rounds	Tillis
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The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. SINEMA). On this vote, the yeas are 53, the nays are 44.

The motion is agreed to.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 1:01 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. SINEMA).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

NOMINATION OF CHRISTINE P. O'HEARN

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, today I rise in support of the confirmation of Ms. Christine O'Hearn to the U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey. I was proud to recommend Ms. O'Hearn for this nomination. She has the qualifications, intellect, and the temperament necessary to make an excellent and impartial Federal judge, and I am confident that she will serve the U.S. District of New Jersey well.

A proud South Jersey native, Ms. O'Hearn was born in Camden, graduated from the University of Delaware, and earned her juris doctor from Temple University's Beasley School of Law in Philadelphia. She is an expert in employment and labor law who has worked on behalf of both employers and workers during her impressive career.

She is currently a partner at the firm of Brown & Connery in Westmont, NJ, where she is highly regarded by her colleagues for her keen insight and confident command of the issues at hand in every case she takes on. Twice she was named one of the Top 40 attorneys under 40 in New Jersey. She has also been featured in New Jersey Law Journal's "Women and Minorities in the Profession." Ms. O'Hearn also previously served as an adjunct professor at Rutgers University School of Law in Camden.

In 2020, Ms. O'Hearn was appointed to the U.S. Magistrate Judge Selection Committee and has served on various distinguished boards, including the New Jersey State Committee of the American College of Trial Lawyers and the New Jersey Court's District IV Ethics Committee.

And this year—this gives you an insight of the person that she is beyond her competence and capability and intellect—she has spent more than 85 hours volunteering as a pro bono attorney for newly arriving Afghan refugees

in Fort Dix, NJ, informing them of their rights and helping them navigate our complicated immigration laws. She described this work as immensely fulfilling and humbling, and I hope it inspires others in the legal profession to lend a hand to the nationwide refugee resettlement effort.

Ms. O'Hearn's professional credentials, combined with her compassion and commitment to the fair and impartial administration of justice, will make her an outstanding judge.

Finally, I would like to remind my colleagues that the U.S. District of New Jersey is one of the busiest courts in all of America. As of last year, more than 46,000 cases were pending before it, many of them among the most complex and challenging cases in the Nation.

Yet multiple vacancies on the court have left its seated judges with some of the highest caseloads in the country, prompting the Judicial Conference of the United States to declare them judicial emergencies.

Now, we have made some encouraging progress on that front in recent months. However, the people of New Jersey deserve nothing less than a fully staffed district court, not to mention all of the parties with business pending before it.

I am confident that Ms. O'Hearn's experience and intellectual rigor will be an asset to the U.S. District Court of New Jersey, and I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in support of her swift confirmation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the vote that was scheduled for 2:30 occur immediately.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

VOTE ON O'HEARN NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the O'Hearn nomination?

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS), and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

The result was announced—yeas 53, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 416 Ex.]

YEAS—53

Baldwin	Brown	Casey
Bennet	Cantwell	Collins
Blumenthal	Cardin	Coons
Booker	Carper	Cortez Masto

Duckworth	Luján	Schatz
Durbin	Manchin	Schumer
Feinstein	Markey	Shaheen
Gillibrand	Menendez	Sinema
Graham	Merkley	Smith
Hassan	Murkowski	Stabenow
Heinrich	Murphy	Tester
Hickenlooper	Murray	Van Hollen
Hirono	Ossoff	Warner
Kaine	Padilla	Warnock
Kelly	Peters	Warren
King	Reed	Whitehouse
Klobuchar	Rosen	Wyden
Leahy	Sanders	

NAYS—44

Barrasso	Grassley	Portman
Blackburn	Hagerty	Risch
Boozman	Hawley	Romney
Braun	Hoeven	Rubio
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Capito	Inhofe	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Kennedy	Shelby
Cotton	Lankford	Sullivan
Cramer	Lee	Thune
Crapo	Lummis	Toomey
Cruz	Marshall	Tuberville
Daines	McConnell	Wicker
Ernst	Moran	Young
Fischer	Paul	

NOT VOTING—3

Blunt	Rounds	Tillis
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The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's actions.

The majority leader.

MOTION TO DISCHARGE

Mr. SCHUMER. Pursuant to S. Res. 27, the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs being tied on the question of reporting, I move to discharge the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs from further consideration of Brian Eddie Nelson, of California, to be Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Crimes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the provisions of S. Res. 27, there will now be up to 4 hours of debate on the motion, equally divided between the two leaders, or their designees, with no motions, points of order, or amendments in order.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second. There is.

The yeas and nays are ordered.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, for the information of the Senate, we expect the vote to discharge the nomination to occur about 5:30 p.m. today.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

VOTING RIGHTS

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I rise today in defense of the most sacred right we have in this country, and that is the right to vote. This right is fundamental to our democracy. It is the right to make your voice heard in our government.

But this right is under attack by ultraconservative State lawmakers who

are restricting access to our ballot boxes—the same people who continue to cast unserious, faceless and dangerous doubts on the results of the 2020 election.

I am not being hyperbolic when I say, if these attacks succeed, there will be grave consequences for our democratic system not just in those States, but throughout our country.

So as I have said time and again, we must pass strong Federal voting rights protections into law, because doing so is essential to making sure that our democracy stays a democracy. Democrats are rightfully exploring every potential avenue to ensure Americans' fundamental right to vote is not restricted.

We are voting on legislation this week—the Freedom to Vote Act—that has been the result of extended negotiations and discussions. And I appreciate all my colleagues who are working to craft a bill all of us can agree to, one that ensures that voters have equal access to the ballot box; that promotes best practices for voter registration and administration; and protects our elections from the very real threat of interference, both foreign and domestic.

This is a reasonable bill by any stretch of the imagination. And I challenge anyone to tell me what could be more controversial about making election day a public holiday or ensuring everyone has the opportunity to vote early, making sure everyone can request a vote-by-mail ballot.

These are simple measures to ensure that every American's voice can be heard. And I am glad that this bill includes protections so it will help give power back to the people in our government, making sure people pick their representatives rather than representatives picking their voters; by stopping special interest money from drowning out Americans' voices and votes; and by protecting and securing each American citizen's right to cast their ballot.

Again, nothing in this bill should be controversial if you care about the health of our democracy. So I hope our Republican colleagues will join us in supporting it, because I strongly believe protecting every American's right to vote should not be a partisan issue. And my Republican colleagues will have a chance this week to inspire confidence in our elections and make sure they are secure by voting for this commonsense legislation.

But if there are some who want to stand between voters and their due right to the ballot box, we cannot, as public servants, simply throw up our hands and say: Oh, well, we tried.

So Republicans choose to look the other way on implementing Federal voting rights protections because voter suppression tactics might benefit them politically.

Democrats must use every legislative tool needed to get the Freedom to Vote Act to President Biden's desk, including an exemption to the filibuster, because, as I have said, of all the critical

things we will vote on this Congress—and many are so important to our workers and families—this is the most important. It is about the future of our democracy.

And if our Republican colleagues are not willing to stand up for our democracy, we can't let them hide behind Senate rules and block Democrats from doing so on our own. The stakes are really simply too high to fail. One way or another, this Senate has to pass the Freedom to Vote Act.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

ENERGY

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I come to the floor today to talk about what Americans are talking about all across the country, and that is the fact that energy prices are rising and doing it dramatically.

Energy is called a master resource for a reason. It powers our communities, our homes, our military, and our economy. It fuels the trucks that bring goods and groceries to market. It keeps the lights on at small businesses all across the country, and it heats our homes. This is the reason why higher energy prices mean higher prices in every other part of our life.

Now, over the last 9 months, people have been seeing this all across the country. Energy prices have gone up, and not just by a little. They have gone up a lot. It has contributed to higher prices for just about everything we do and everywhere we go.

The cost of a tank of gas is about a dollar higher now than it was when Joe Biden came into the White House. As a result, if you go to fill up at your local gas station, it is about \$25 more to fill your tank today than it was back in January, on the 20th, when Joe Biden took the oath of office.

Now, it is not just gasoline that has gone up; it is the gas we use to heat our homes. Natural gas powers over half of the homes that are heated across America. And the price is now at a 7-year high. So as a result, families are going to pay a lot more not just to drive, but also to heat their homes this winter.

And it is interesting because here in America, we have the energy resources we need; we are just not able to use them because of this administration.

Under the last administration, America became the largest producer of oil and natural gas in the world—in the world—America. America's energy dominance worked to help us reduce our trade deficit. It brought home more jobs, brought industries home to America. It fueled the best economy in my lifetime here at home in America. And as a nation, we became energy independent for the first time in 70 years.

Well, these were historic achievements by America's energy workers. In my home State, the State of Wyoming was proud to play a major role in these achievements. Wyoming is America's No. 1 per-capita exporter of energy. We